REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1–29, 31–44, 51, 53, and 55–100 are pending in the above-captioned application. Claims 1–4, 6, 8–29, 31–44, 51, 53, 55–79, 81, and 83–100 stand rejected, and claims 5, 7, 80, and 82 are withdrawn from consideration. With this paper, claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 13–15, 17, 31, 32, 36–39, 40–42, 51, 78, 79, 83, 84, 86, 88, 89, 91, and 93 have been amended, and claims 2, 5–7, 28, 33, 34, 76, 77, 80–82, 85, 87, and 90 have been canceled. No new matter was added with the amendment.

Applicants thank the Examiner and the Examiner's supervisor, Ram Shukla, for conducting a telephone interview with Applicant H. Garrett Wada and the undersigned attorney on February 29, 2008. The breadth of claim 1 was discussed. Limitations of the invention that are novel over the cited prior art were also discussed. In particular, differences between the instant application and the cited Kawabata et al. (EP 1376126A1) reference were discussed. No agreement was reached with respect to the claims.

I. Election/Restrictions

Claims 5, 7, 80, and 82 have been canceled with this paper. Nonetheless, Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's confirmation that these claims were withdrawn as being drawn to a nonelected species rather than to a nonelected invention.

II. Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

The Examiner states in the current Office action, "The rejection of Claims 37–40 and 95–97 made under 35 USC 112/2nd paragraph in section 6 of the previous office action is moot in view of the cancellation of the claims." These claims were not canceled. Each of the Examiner's reasons for rejecting claims 37–40 and 95–97 were addressed in the amendments presented in Applicants' response filed July 5, 2007.

Claims 37, 38, 95, and 96, all of which depend either directly or indirectly from claim 10, were rejected because they recited the limitation "the one or more conjugates," while claim 10 described only "a conjugate." Applicants amended claim 10 to recite "one or more conjugates," thus providing antecedent basis for this limitation in claims 37, 38, 95, and 96.

Claims 39, 40, and 97 were rejected because they recited the limitation "the labeled analogue," and the Examiner alleged it was not clear if "the labeled analogue" referred to the labeled analyte or to some other labeled compound. Applicants amended claim 39 to clarify that the analyte labeled by a detectable marker forms a labeled analyte and that an analogue of the analyte labeled by a detectable marker forms a labeled analogue. Claims 40 and 97, which depend from claim 39, were thereby made definite.

With the above-described amendments filed July 5, 2007, Applicants believe claims 37–40 and 95–97 should be found to comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

III. Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by Kawabata et al. (EP 1376126A1) as evidenced by Walston et al. (US 2001/0055591) in view of Krylov et al. (Analytical Chemistry)

Claims 1–3, 6, 9–29, 33, 35–44, 51–55, 59–65, 67–78, 81, 83, 85, 86, 90, and 92–100 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Kawabata et al. (EP 1376126A1) as evidenced by Walston et al. (US 2001/0055591) in view of Krylov et al. (Analytical Chemistry, Vol. 72, p. 111R, 2000). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 39, 42, 51, and 93 to limit the charged polymer to a polyanion. Support for this amendment may be found throughout the specification as well as in claims 2–4, 6, 77–79, and 81. Claims 3, 4, 8, 15, 31, 32, 78, 79, 83, 84, 89, and 91 have been amended to conform the terminology of these claims to the claims from which they depend. Claims 2 and 77, which recited both polyanionic and polycationic polymers, have been canceled with this paper. Claims 6 and 81, which were made redundant by the amendment, have been canceled. Claims 5, 7, 80, and 82, which were inconsistent with the amendment, have been canceled.

Applicants have also amended independent claims 1, 39, 42, 51, and 93 to specify that the separation (claims 1, 39, and 42) or concentration (claims 51 and 93) channel is filled with a separation (claims 1, 39, and 42) or concentration (claims 51 and 93) media [hereinafter abbreviated as a separation/concentration channel or a separation/concentration media] and a

polyanion "added to" the separation/concentration media. Support for the limitation in quotation marks may be found on page 16, lines 32 and 33, and on page 65, lines 30–32.

Applicants have additionally amended independent claims 1, 39, 42, 51, and 93 to limit the separation (claims 1, 39, and 42) or concentration (claims 51 and 93) step to an electrophoretic operation. Support for this amendment may be found throughout the specification as well as in claims 28, 55, and 85. Claims 28 and 85 were rendered redundant by the amendment and have been canceled.

That the polyanion binds sample constituents that bind non-specifically to the affinity molecule, as recited in amended claims 1, 39, 42, 51, and 93, is supported on page 77, lines 8–10.

Claim 13 has been amended to correct a typographical error. Claims 36–38, 40, and 41 have been amended to correct references to step numbers in claims 1 and 39. Claims 51 and 93 have been amended to correct references to the media in the concentration channel. Claims 51 and 93 now refer to a "concentration" media rather than a "separation" media. Original claims 86, 88, and 89, which depend from claim 51, correctly referred to a "concentration" media, and the specification provides additional support for the amendment on, for example, page 73, line 32, through page 74, line 3. Claims 29 and 86 were amended solely to correct dependency of the claims necessitated by canceled claims.

As all of the above amendments either delete matter, correct errors, or are supported by the original claims and the specification, no new matter was added with any of the amendments.

To warrant rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *See* MPEP § 2142. With regard to independent claims 1, 39, 42, 51, and 93, Kawabata et al., Walston et al., and Krylov et al. do not teach providing a microfluidic device having a separation/concentration channel filled with a separation/concentration media and a polyanion added to the separation/concentration media, the polyanion binding sample constituents that bind non-specifically to a recited affinity substance, thereby reducing interference from the non-specifically binding constituents.

The Examiner acknowledges on page 15 of the present Office action that "Kawabata et al. does not teach filling a separation channel with a separation media and a

charged polymer before separation." However, the Examiner notes that Krylov et al. teach immobilizing heparin (a negatively charged polymer) on the capillary wall of a separation chamber and offers the opinion that "it would be prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the capillary electrophoresis method of Kawabata et al. to include heparin in the separation chamber as taught by Krylov et al." Applicants respectfully disagree.

Heparin serves a fundamentally different function in the separation channel of Krylov et al. from the function served by the polyanion in Applicants' claimed methods. The cited example of Krylov et al. on page 122R, the first full paragraph, provides a technique based on affinity capillary electrophoresis. On page 122R, first column, the paragraph headed "Affinity Capillary Electrophoresis," Krylov et al. state, "The basic principle involves the measurement of an altered electrophoretic mobility of the complexed species as compared with the free ligand." In the cited example, the sample contains two analytes (species) of interest: two peptides that are different only in the stereochemistry of a single amino acid and so form complexes with heparin that have only slightly different dissociation constants. The heparin is immobilized on a capillary wall. Immobilizing the heparin doubles the migration time of the peptides through the capillary, thereby magnifying the slight difference in the dissociation constants and "revealing different retardation for the two peptides." As is apparent from the above discussion, heparin serves as an affinity molecule in the cited example and becomes an element of the complexed species. Therefore, the method discussed by Krylov et al. teaches only an affinity molecule bound to the wall within the separation channel and does not additionally teach a polyanion that is added to a separation media within a separation channel to bind sample constituents that bind non-specifically to the affinity molecule.

Further, "Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue requires interpreting the claim language, and considering both the invention and the prior art references as a whole." *See* MPEP § 2141.02 (emphasis added). When each of the prior art references and the claimed inventions is taken as a whole, a clear difference can be seen between the claimed methods and the methods taught by Kawabata et al. and Krylov et al. (Please note that the Walston et al. reference was cited by the Examiner for the sole purpose of providing evidence that "heparin is a polysaccharide with a strong negative charge.")

Applicants' claimed methods involve an affinity molecule that contacts the analyte of interest prior to a separation or concentration step plus a polyanion added to the separation/concentration media in the separation/concentration channel. The affinity molecule increases migration time of the analyte-and-affinity molecule complex. The polyanion binds sample constituents that bind non-specifically to the affinity substance, with the result that interference from these sample constituents in a migration shift assay is reduced.

As described by the Examiner at the bottom of page 14 of the present Office action, "Kawabata et al. teaches a method for measuring (detecting) a target separated by complexing with a nucleic acid chain-binding affinity substance (abstract)." Krylov et al. teach separating two peptides (analytes of interest) on the basis of the difference in the affinities of the two peptides to heparin. Both of these are methods of improving separation by complexing the analyte of interest in a sample with an affinity molecule. Neither of these addresses further improving separation by binding interfering constituents of a sample with a polyanion.

At a minimum, none of the cited references teaches providing a microfluidic device having a separation/concentration channel filled with a separation/concentration media and a polyanion added to the separation/concentration media as recited in Applicants' independent claims 1, 39, 42, 51, and 93. The Examiner has acknowledged at the top of page 15 of the current Office action that this limitation is absent from the teachings of Kawabata et al.; that while Kawabata et al. teach adding a polyanion to a reaction mixture, they do not teach "filling a separation channel with a separation media and a charged polymer before separation." The limitation is similarly absent from the teachings of Krylov et al. Not only does the polyanion serve as an affinity molecule in the cited method of Krylov et al., it is immobilized on a capillary wall rather than being added to the separation media. (As previously noted, the Walston et al. reference was cited by the Examiner for the sole purpose of providing evidence that "heparin is a polysaccharide with a strong negative charge.")

Thus, the combination of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., and Krylov et al. neither teaches nor suggests all of the limitations of Applicants' amended independent claims 1, 39, 42, 51, and 93. Withdrawal of the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawabata et al. as evidenced by Walston et al. and in view of Krylov et al. is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Claims 3, 9–29, 35–38, 43, 44, and 94– 96 depend directly or indirectly from amended independent claim 1; claims 40, 41, 97, 98, and 99 depend directly or indirectly from amended independent claim 39; claim 100 depends directly from amended independent claim 42; and claims 53, 55, 59–65, 67–75, 78, 83, 86, and 92 depend directly or indirectly from amended independent claim 51. Any claim depending from a nonobvious claim is also nonobvious. *See* MPEP § 2143.03 and *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Therefore, dependent claims 3, 9–29, 35–38, 40, 41, 43, 44, 53, 55, 59–65, 67–75, 78, 83, 86, 92, and 94–100 are nonobvious. Withdrawal of the rejection of these claims over Kawabata et al. as evidenced by Walston et al. and in view of Krylov et al. is, therefore, respectfully requested. Claims 2, 6, 33, 52, 54, 76, 77, 81, 85, and 90 were canceled with this and previous papers.

IV. Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawabata et al. (EP 1376126A1) as evidenced by Walston et al. (US 2001/0055591) in view of Krylov et al. (Analytical Chemistry) and further in view of Bickel et al. (Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.)

Claims 4, 8, 79, and 84 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kawabata et al. (EP 1376126A1) as evidenced by Walston et al. (US 2001/0055591) in view of Krylov et al. (Analytical Chemistry, Vol. 72, p. 111R, 2000) as applied to claims 1–3, 6, 9–29, 33, 35–44, 51–55, 59–65, 67–78, 81, 83, 85, 86, 90, and 92–100 and further in view of Bickel et al. (Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci., Vol. 89, pp. 10001–10005, November 1992). The rejection of these claims is respectfully traversed.

To warrant rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *See* MPEP § 2142. As demonstrated above, the combination of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., and Krylov et al. neither teaches nor suggests all of the limitations of Applicants' amended independent claims 1 and 51, from which claims 4, 8, 79, and 84 depend. Thus, claims 1 and 51 are nonobvious over Kawabata et al., Walston et al., and Krylov et al.

Bickel et al. teach adding heparin sulfate to protein extracts in a binding buffer, this buffer mixture then being loaded onto a standard polyacrylamide gel for electrophoretic separation. *See* the first column of page 10002. Bickel et al. do not teach the feature demonstrated above to be absent from the teachings of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., and

Krylov et al., i.e., providing a microfluidic device having a separation/concentration channel filled with a separation/concentration media and a polyanion added to the separation/ concentration media, the polyanion binding sample constituents that bind non-specifically to the recited affinity substance, thereby reducing interference from the non-specifically binding constituents. Therefore, Applicants' amended independent claims 1 and 51 are nonobvious over the combination of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., Krylov et al., and Bickel et al.

Claims 4 and 8 depend directly and indirectly, respectively, from amended independent claim 1, while claims 79 and 84 depend indirectly from amended independent claim 51. As any claim depending from a nonobvious claim is also nonobvious, dependent claims 4, 8, 79, and 84 are nonobvious. Withdrawal of the rejection of these claims over Kawabata et al. as evidenced by Walston et al. in view of Krylov et al. and further in view of Bickel et al. is, therefore, respectfully requested.

V. Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawabata et al. (EP 1376126A1) as evidenced by Walston et al. (US 2001/0055591) in view of Krylov et al. (Analytical Chemistry) and further in view of Stathakis et al. (Journal of Chromatography)

Claims 31, 32 and 87–89 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kawabata et al. (EP 1376126A1) as evidenced by Walston et al. (US 2001/0055591) in view of Krylov et al. Analytical Chemistry, Vol. 72, p. 111R, 2000) as applied to claims 1–3, 6, 9–29, 33, 35–44, 51–55, 59–65, 67–78, 81, 83, 85, 86, 90, and 92–100 and further in view of Stathakis et al. (Journal of Chromatography A, Vol. 817, pp. 227–232, 1998). The rejection of these claims is respectfully traversed.

As demonstrated above, claims 1 and 51, from which claims 31, 32, and 87–89 depend, are nonobvious over the combination of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., and Krylov et al. Stathakis et al. do not teach the feature demonstrated above to be absent from the teachings of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., and Krylov et al., i.e., providing a microfluidic device having a separation/concentration channel filled with a separation/concentration media and a polyanion added to the separation/concentration media, the polyanion binding sample constituents that bind non-specifically to the recited affinity substance, thereby reducing interference from the non-specifically binding constituents. At most, Stathakis et al. teach adsorbing a charged polymer,

i.e., dextran sulfate or poly(vinyl sulphonic acid), to a capillary wall, thereby minimizing protein-wall interactions during electrophoretic separation of proteins in food samples. As is made clear in section 2.2, in the second column of page 228, the polymer is adsorbed to the inner wall of the capillary; the capillary contains no separation/concentration media and so is not filled with a separation/concentration media and a polyanion added to the separation/concentration media. Thus, Applicants' amended independent claims 1 and 51 are nonobvious over the combination of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., Krylov et al., and Stathakis et al.

Claims 31 and 32 depend directly from amended independent claim 1, while claims 87–89 depend indirectly from amended independent claim 51. As any claim depending from a nonobvious claim is also nonobvious, dependent claims 31, 32, and 87–89 are nonobvious. Withdrawal of the rejection of these claims over Kawabata et al. as evidenced by Walston et al. in view of Krylov et al. and further in view of Stathakis et al. is, therefore, respectfully requested.

VI. Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawabata et al. (EP 1376126A1) as evidenced by Walston et al. (US 2001/0055591) in view of Krylov et al. (Analytical Chemistry) and further in view of Stalcup et al. (Analytical Chemistry)

Claims 34 and 91 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kawabata et al. (EP 1376126A1) as evidenced by Walston et al. (US 2001/0055591) in view of Krylov et al. (Analytical Chemistry, Vol. 72, p. 111R, 2000) as applied to claims 1–3, 6, 9–29, 33, 35–44, 51–55, 59–65, 67–78, 81, 83, 85, 86, 90, and 92–100 and further in view of Stalcup et al. (Analytical Chemistry, Vol. 66, pp. 3054–3059, 1994). The rejection of these claims is respectfully traversed.

As demonstrated above, claims 1 and 51, from which claims 34 and 91 depend, are nonobvious over the combination of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., and Krylov et al. Stalcup et al. do not teach the feature demonstrated above to be absent from the teachings of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., and Krylov et al., i.e., providing a microfluidic device having a separation/concentration channel filled with a separation/concentration media and a polyanion added to the separation/concentration media, the polyanion binding sample constituents that bind non-specifically to the recited affinity substance, thereby reducing interference from the non-

specifically binding constituents. At most, Stalcup et al. teach 2% heparin in a phosphate run buffer used for capillary zone electrophoresis. The capillary contains no separation or concentration media, per the "Apparatus" section in column 2 of page 3054. Thus, Applicants' amended independent claims 1 and 51 are nonobvious over the combination of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., Krylov et al., and Stalcup et al.

Claim 34 depends indirectly from amended independent claim 1, while claim 91 depends indirectly from amended independent claim 51. As any claim depending from a nonobvious claim is also nonobvious, dependent claims 34 and 91 are nonobvious. Withdrawal of the rejection of these claims over Kawabata et al. as evidenced by Walston et al. in view of Krylov et al. and further in view of Stalcup et al. is, therefore, respectfully requested.

VII. Claim rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawabata et al. (EP 1376126A1) as evidenced by Walston et al. (US 2001/0055591) in view of Krylov et al. (Analytical Chemistry) and further in view of Fukui et al. (Nucleic Acids Research)

Claim 66 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kawabata et al. (EP 1376126A1) as evidenced by Walston et al. (US 2001/0055591) in view of Krylov et al. (Analytical Chemistry, Vol. 72, p. 111R, 2000) as applied to claims 1–3, 6, 9–29, 33, 35–44, 51–55, 59–65, 67–78, 81, 83, 85, 86, 90, and 92–100 and further in view of Fukui et al. (Nucleic Acids Research, Vol. 24, No. 20, pp. 3962–3967, 1996). The rejection of this claim is respectfully traversed.

As demonstrated above, claim 51, from which claim 66 depends, is nonobvious over the combination of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., and Krylov et al. Fukui et al. do not teach the feature demonstrated above to be absent from the teachings of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., and Krylov et al., i.e., providing a microfluidic device having a concentration channel filled with a concentration media and a polyanion added to the concentration media, the polyanion binding sample constituents that bind non-specifically to the recited affinity substance, thereby reducing interference from the non-specifically binding constituents. At most, at the bottom of page 3962, continuing on to the top of page 3963, Fukui et al. teach a high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) method carried out using a COSMOSIL AR-300

column (4.6 x 150 mm). Therefore, Applicants' amended independent claim 51 is nonobvious over the combination of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., Krylov et al., and Fukui et al.

Claim 66 depends indirectly from amended independent claim 51. As any claim depending from a nonobvious claim is also nonobvious, claim 66 is nonobvious. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 66 as unpatentable over Kawabata et al. as evidenced by Walston et al. in view of Krylov et al. and further in view of Fukui et al. is, therefore, respectfully requested.

VIII. Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawabata et al. (EP 1376126A1) as evidenced by Walston et al. (US 2001/0055591) in view of Krylov et al. (Analytical Chemistry) and further in view of Kaniansky et al. (Analytical Chemistry)

Claims 57 and 58 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kawabata et al. (EP 1376126A1) as evidenced by Walston et al. (US 2001/0055591) in view of Krylov et al. (Analytical Chemistry, Vol. 72, p. 111R, 2000) as applied to claims 1–3, 6, 9–29, 33, 35–44, 51–55, 59–65, 67–78, 81, 83, 85, 86, 90, and 92–100 and further in view of Kaniansky et al. (Analytical Chemistry, Vol. 72, pp. 3596–3604, 2000). The rejection of these claims is respectfully traversed.

As demonstrated above, claim 51, from which claims 56 and 57 depend, is nonobvious over the combination of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., and Krylov et al. Kaniansky et al. do not teach the feature demonstrated above to be absent from the teachings of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., and Krylov et al., i.e., providing a microfluidic device having a concentration channel filled with a concentration media and a polyanion added to the concentration media, the polyanion binding sample constituents that bind non-specifically to the recited affinity substance, thereby reducing interference from the non-specifically binding constituents. Kaniansky et al. do not teach a concentration channel. Further, Table 1 in the first column of page 3599, which provides detailed compositions of the electrolyte solutions employed in the capillary electrophoresis experiments, does not show both a concentration media and a polyanion. Therefore, Applicants' amended independent claim 51 is nonobvious over the combination of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., Krylov et al., and Kaniansky et al.

Claims 57 and 58 depend directly from amended independent claim 51. As any claim depending from a nonobvious claim is also nonobvious, dependent claims 57 and 58 are

nonobvious. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 57 and 58 as being unpatentable over Kawabata et al. as evidenced by Walston et al. in view of Krylov et al. and further in view of Kaniansky et al. is, therefore, respectfully requested.

IX. Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawabata et al. (EP 1376126A1) as evidenced by Walston et al. (US 2001/0055591) in view of Krylov et al. (Analytical Chemistry) and further in view of Wolfe et al. (Electrophoresis)

Claims 56 and 57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kawabata et al. (EP 1376126A1) as evidenced by Walston et al. (US 2001/0055591) in view of Krylov et al. (Analytical Chemistry, Vol. 72, p. 111R, 2000) as applied to claims 1–3, 6, 9–29, 33, 35–44, 51–55, 59–65, 67–78, 81, 83, 85, 86, 90, and 92–100 and further in view of Wolfe et al. (Electrophoresis, Vol. 23, pp. 727–733, 2002). The rejection of these claims is respectfully traversed.

As demonstrated above, claim 51, from which claims 56 and 57 depend, is nonobvious over the combination of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., and Krylov et al. Wolfe et al. do not teach the feature demonstrated above to be absent from the teachings of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., and Krylov et al., i.e., providing a microfluidic device having a concentration channel filled with a concentration media and a polyanion added to the concentration media, the polyanion binding sample constituents that bind non-specifically to the recited affinity substance, thereby reducing interference from the non-specifically binding constituents. Wolfe et al. do not teach regarding a concentration channel. The abstract describes a procedure in which DNA is adsorbed onto bare silica. Contaminants are removed, and the adsorbed DNA is eluted in a small volume of buffer. The DNA is then subjected to PCR amplification. While this could be considered a concentration step, it is not carried out in a channel, nor is there either a concentration media or a polyanion present. Therefore, Applicants' amended independent claim 51 is nonobvious over the combination of Kawabata et al., Walston et al., Krylov et al., and Wolfe et al.

Claims 56 and 57 depend directly from amended independent claim 51. As any claim depending from a nonobvious claim is also nonobvious, dependent claims 56 and 57 are nonobvious. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 56 and 57 as being unpatentable over

Kawabata et al. as evidenced by Walston et al. in view of Krylov et al. and further in view of Wolfe et al. is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants believe all the pending claims are in condition for allowance and should be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would in any way expedite the prosecution of the application, please do not hesitate to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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